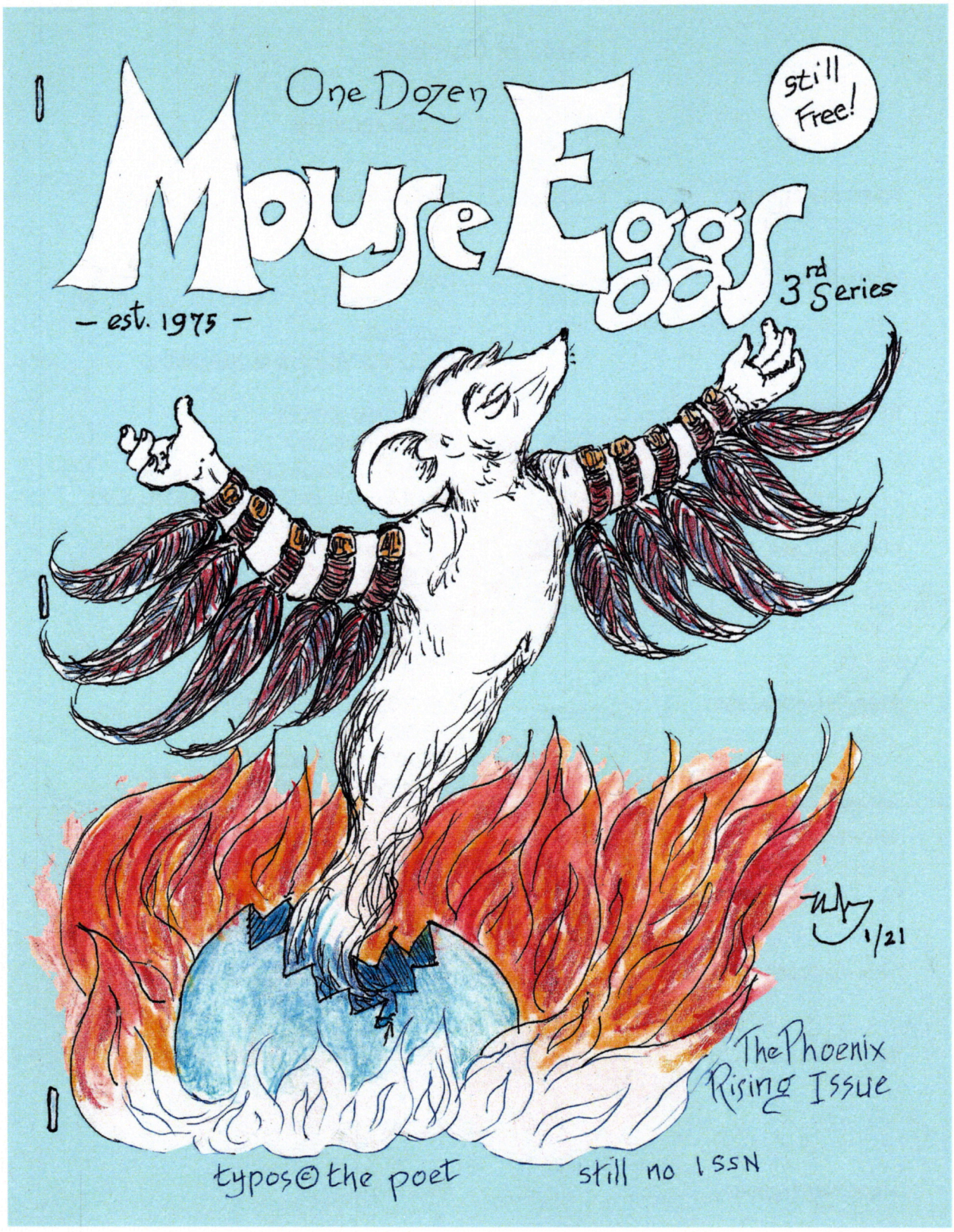

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3/5

Click on title to view poem

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MARC NERENBERG..... BACK COVER

archive 2021

Sometimes Radio Childhood comes in
off its impossible narrow band
as if off a tooth filling
irradiating my now .

am I on the bridge at its end
am I the bridge can there be an
em cee in a wet dream no
nothing but absolute silence .

Radio Childhood , you are breaking up
the torque in which the present holds me
every adult icon - - . Had my heroes
not chosen me - - -

Lullaby

Sometimes Radio Childhood comes in
off its impossible narrow band
as if off a tooth filling
irradiating my now .

am I on the bridge at its end
am I the bridge can there be an
em cee in a wet dream no
nothing but absolute silence .

Radio Childhood , you are breaking up
the torque in which the present holds me
every adult icon.... Had my heroes
not chosen me ....

unpublished/untyped
2003

arcmtl 2021

Artie Gold

R.W.

I am not moved by her tears
which seek
to make my strength a weapon
in her hands

that my anger should be the abutment
against which all household sense ends,
seek comfort in my restraint no violence
or not physical

making apparent villain of the one who doesn't
first cry
which I don't believe and thank god
the argument has no witnesses but my will
to be heard.

.79
First published in the McGill Observer (no date.)

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CAGE-PIECE (previously unpublished)
Artie Gold (1947 – 2007)

A friend of mine has a large dog
    who has rather an appetite for cats.
Alas
    there is no reconciling this appetite.
If it's your cat the dog eats;
    that friend apologizes, explains:
The dog eats cats, that's that.
There is nothing he can do
    until the dog has finished eating the cat.

Now this friend of mine
    a while back met, well, I guess you could say
        met his true love.
Soon they had decided
    going from one apartment to another,
    sleeping over, two rents –
the situation favoured their moving
both into the same apartment, sharing lives.
Alas
    a possession of the friend's true love was a cat.

Now the friend had lived with the dog as man and dog.
The friend's true love had lived with her cat a long time
    and grown too fond of that cat
        to consider getting rid of it.

One ridiculous solution occurred to me
    that the friend's true love could feed her cat
        to her true love's dog, thus lightening baggage.
That solution did not occur to them.

They sought to work with other opportunities.
These clearly could not have either
    sacrifice his or her pet to the other's behalf
for this would be a terrible way
    to move into a mutual marriage,
        one not based on sacrifice
        so much as sharing.

Families are based on sacrifice.
    Are inherited.
You do with them what you can.
Often an imbalance leaves the son or daughter
    with a parent.
A parent discarded from a couple
    death has broken up by discarding half.

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It was decided
     that one half of the day,
half,
     to be fair to the other pet,
     to be fair to the other person,
would be set aside for the cat,
one half set aside for the dog.
Alas
     there was only one really good living space
and the time not spent in that space
     would be spent in a closet.

now
     if the dog ever got loose,
essentially, that would be it for the cat.
Unless,
     and only unless
that cat could get to where the dog was kept
to keep it apart while the cat was everywhere else.
     same way if the cat got loose,
     obviously
     it would find itself in with the dog.

and that is the way
they go into the marriage.
     so far
     the cat has not seen the dog
except
     those times each day
both are held struggling
     the one trying to eat the other,
     the other trying to flee the eater.

I wait.
     there is a long time.
          something will happen.

the couple
     grows closer
          and closer
               daily.

Artie Gold
nov 6/76

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KEN NORRIS

WHEN DAWN COMES

The early morning darkness enfolds. In the next room
they're discussing plans to secure the Maltese Falcon.
When dawn comes Effie will be here with the black bird
wrapped in newspaper.

Does the ship sail
from Honolulu? I can't remember, but think so.
Dead captains litter our lives.

I was always on the verge
of something important. Things were always going to change
in big ways. The song would deliver, the poem
would change the way we see flower petals fall
forever.

Loneliness puts its arm around us
all. You in your lonely room and I in mine.
And the world changed itself. It went on
without us, in spite of us, to spite us
in our pride.

The black bird arrives
and I'm outside of the story. It's a fake.
Cairo and the Fat Man take a hike, Wilmer
takes the fall, and Spade pushes Bridget over the falls.
A man's got to do something, in the face of a dead partner,
in the realm of fading dreams. . .

when dawn comes.

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KEN NORRIS

WHEN TAYLOR SWIFT BECOMES STALE CAKE

We watched the sun sink into the ocean.
The array of colour was nothing special,
though all of Waikiki had a golden glow
for twenty minutes. And then it was done,
the day put to bed, paving the way
to a very starry night.

The most beautiful girls
get old and die--I've seen it happen\
for myself. That hottie on the beach
in the green bathing suit is wrinkled and grey
in forty years, and there's no preventing it.
But for now she can lash me with her golden hair
any time she likes.

When Taylor Swift
becomes stale cake I'll know it's time
for me to go. Till then I'm hanging in
with living, and desire, and all the colours
of the rainbow.

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Beauty Bush

For the color on the berry bush
outside your window, what words?
For sun's pale veneer on perfect globes,
say what? Say *Mauve*, say *Teal*
and of the berry clusters , say *like*
pearls a woman might arrange
like little wheels of polished wood
worn as earrings laden with charm,
the woman herself fluid in cotton dress
that loves her body.

But pearls must be pried from
tight shell lips at the seaside
while from autumn to spring
berries of beauty bush issue freely
from the shrub, and mind is rinsed
of sadness by mere sight of
such offerings for which words
have no say.

CEL
5/2015, 9/2020

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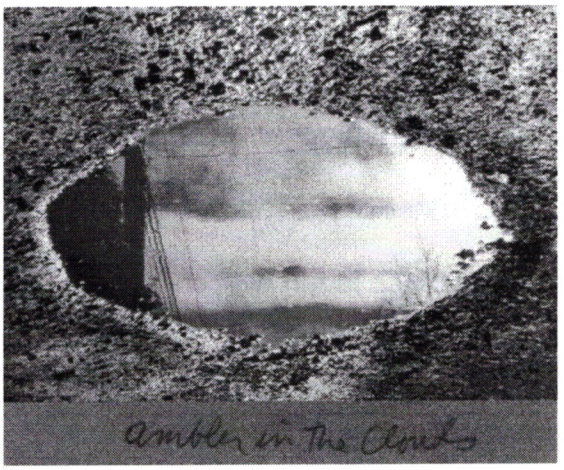
Cat Nap (for Ambler, c2000 – 2017)

I should take a cue
from the white cat
who hibernates in November
on a straight-back chair with straw bottom
body molded to a towel's folds
face and ears tucked under a leg.

Only the orange rings on his tail
and two pink paws reveal his identity.
That and his wheezy snore,
the rise and fall of his belly.



Why can't I just let
my softly breathing body
spin an insulated field
around my lines of repose
instead of mind Vaulting off
to Baltimore or Bangalore or
the dirty cat food dishes
in the laundry tub?

As for the cat,
even when he shifts positions,
every piece of him finds its puzzle fit
and settles Into mindless harmony.

A brief deep sigh his jaw
forms a half moon smile.
Whatever needs fixing,
his resting restores it.

I think I'll drop everything to be
a gray November copycat.

For Spike
The first time the tomcat
chose to lie on my chest
he lent me his whole orange weight
and warmth, igniting decades of love

Claudia Lapp (CEL)

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Comfort Food for Theodore Lapp, 1904 – 1987

When Mom went out alone on Saturdays
my father and I would stand in the white kitchen
with red trim and drink milk from circus-motif glasses.
Dad became a boy again when we tore up slices
of *Wonder Bread,* drowning and slurping up
the soggy pieces, my moustache white, his gray.

On weekends Dad's graceful fingers took up
violin, chess pieces or philosophy books.
At concerts, undone by arias, he wept.
When I held his hand, it was always warm.

Now, when insomnia grips, I reach for comfort,
heat milk on the blue burner, add cardamom and honey.
Sometimes I notice Dad in my kitchen, seated alone
at the breakfast nook. After all these years he still visits,
hands around a mug of milk.

6/2020

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Excerpts from a manuscript in progress, *The Green Archetypal Field of Poetry*, by Stephen Morrissey

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A Visitor from the Future

One fall evening back in the mid-1970s, at Véhicule Art Gallery on Ste. Catherine Street West, I was scheduled to give a reading of my poems. It was dark and rainy outside as I waited for an audience so I could begin. I remember the arrival of a bearded man as he came up the stairs from the street outside. He asked if Stephen Morrissey was giving a poetry reading and I remember speaking with him. He said he had just arrived in Montreal on a train from New York City and he had seen my name in an advertisement for the reading in a newspaper, and he had a few hours between the arrival of the train and his departure from Dorval Airport that same evening on a flight to Ireland. He wanted to know if I had any poems about being Irish and when I answered that I didn't, he turned and left. I remember being annoyed by him and thinking, as well, that whatever was meant by writing Irish poems didn't interest me. I remember that his brief appearance at the reading, before it even began, caused a stir, as others also gathered around him when he entered.

The memory of this stranger has stayed with me all of these years; indeed, I see his visit in a different light now that I have spent many years researching my Irish family history and writing what might be called Irish Poems, such as "The Colours of the Irish Flag" and "The Rock, A Short History of the Irish in Montreal". I think of this stranger as a visitor from the future, as someone who came to remind me of what I would one day be writing, of my concerns in poetry and life, poems of family, memory, the ancestors, and the knowledge that underlying everything we do is this journey we are on, this journey between being born and dying.

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Excerpts from a manuscript in progress, *The Green Archetypal Field of Poetry*, by Stephen Morrissey

---

THE OLD DAYS

That generation of poets, Layton, Dudek, Smith, and Scott, they welcomed young poets; after all, not many young people wanted to be poets in the old days, common-sense prevailed. Bill Goodwin was Irving Layton's nephew but Bill and Irving were more like brothers. My mother lived on Montclair Avenue and, on occasion when visiting her, I used to see Bill walking along Monkland Avenue on his way to Irving Layton's home; that was in the 1990s when Irving wasn't well and Bill and several others looked after him, it was before Irving entered Maimonides long term care residence. Bill was also a poet and I still have one of his books that he published before he retired. Bill told me that he retired from teaching so I could hold on to my teaching job, I replaced Bill in both the English and Humanities Departments. Whatever Bill taught it included poems by Irving Layton and every year he would have Irving visit the college to give a reading. After the reading I would get a lift downtown with them. Poets, like Irving Layton and Louis Dudek, focused on the young, so while Irving was sitting in the front seat of the car he'd turn around and include me in the conversation. He was always polite and considerate. He'd ask what I was writing or what I thought of some political issue; despite his famous enormous ego he was also concerned with mentoring young poets. Layton was a natural teacher but so was Louis Dudek and Frank Scott, they were kind people and we, young poets, benefitted by knowing them. In the old days the established poets mentored younger poets; it was a small community and younger poets were treated with some consideration and respect. Even eccentric poets were accepted by the older poets, they added a lot to life at a time when society was more conservative. I mention all of this as it is an insight into those days when poets were few but they were dedicated to the Muse and to the life of being a poet. That's what it was like in the old days.

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ENDRE FARKAS

What if

this virus –
riding our every breath, cough
and sneeze
missile-fast targeting
our all too human flesh
invisible as air, comes
from where we have settled
soiled the land and changed the climate
for whom we rolled out the red carpet
long ago
slips through every pore
silently
whoops and yelps
manifests its destiny –
what if this virus
is us?

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ENDRE FARKAS

Democracy is Coming to the USA Leonard Cohen

The steps are marble they rise to the Capitol.

The mob, fed raw meat
by Trump and his trumpeters is real.

The blind believe and follow blindly but the leader is in the rear

going the other way.

Walls and the law can't keep them out.

They are scaling it with a mindless goal.

They're smashing doors and windows and because they're White
they are greeted with kid gloves.

Their barbarism grows
like their beards of fading dreams of "White forever."

Their dear leader's trainers having lost their whips
cower in closets
don gas masks against the stink.

On the other side
jacked up on rampage and sense of loss wearing hoodies, hate and
Auschwitz Camp T-shirts

are *patriots*
pounding at the door of democracy.

Now is the time for all good...

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JOHN MCAULEY

The World According to Eratosthenes

Its western expanse swims with airy light
over a quarter of the world's ocean.

The east extends only to India,
narrowing to parallels and meridians
blocking the dogged waves.

Mother Ganges empties
holiness into an unnamed sea
where finned nightmares munch
on ships as snacks.

Continents culled from travellers' accounts
as Eratosthenes quickly scratched in beaches,
banks, and bounds, conserving ink.

Near perfect in his estimation
of the earth's circumference and tilt.

Yet called Beta by detractors who sneered
that his work so irritated the gods
they'd chock up bays with sand
stade after stade (each, 600 Greek feet)
to punish mortals for their shameless curiosity
about the world's curves.

However, because Eratosthenes invented leap day
those in the know usually brought him supper,
hoping they'd be left with open harbours.

When he completed his map,
much of Africa was labelled Libya
with only a grassy stretch
south of the Nile for elephants, rhinos, and such.

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JOHN MCAULEY

Shakespeare's Lost Sports Poem

The coming of the game
an agent of change, adding colour
to Stratford-upon-Avon, a reddish diamond?
Exeunt all to cheer the best!
Fresh plays afield maintain a pitcher's spell
with fielders' hands high and light
from the impact o' the ball on palms.

We strike it afar seemingly at will.
The myth, which doth ever advance,
as base paths are swiftly trod
and foes kept to triple turns abat.
Soon victorious caps will uprise
for another triumphal match of yore.

---With a thank you to Ben Jonson

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JOHN MCAULEY

The Old School

We took recess in the schoolyard
where generations had,
scraping asphalt in oxfords and buckle shoes.
Only staff entered the King Road front door.
The sky faux grey-blue as if improperly fired,
all around, the trees female,
dropping seeds in season.

Students laboring over spelling tests
when teachers' words rolled down the aisles,
conforming shoulders, elbows
as knees squeezed shut.

The new school a block further west.
Girls there with names like Barbara
had short curly bangs
and boys with names like Barry
occasionally met the strap.

Its gym had high windows
and ropes hanging like anacondas.

We also knew to let an unleashed dog
come over on its own
as well as give a wide berth
to any stranger who'd try to sidle up to us
or we might not get home.

No wonder moms now wait
for their kids in cars spewing exhaust.

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JOHN MCAULEY

What Chemistry Means to Me

John Dalton counted atoms by the pinch
when fire was slippery and stone became ash.
The Middle Ages, previously, had dried up too fast.

Dalton persisted in sampling vintages of isotopes
some of which glittered. These and more
would become the basis, I guess, of the Law of Excess?

Dalton overturned a terminology involving the gods,
and without his discovery, was it?
of the Law of Multiple Proportions?
carbon would still be dumped down coal holes
in heaps in people's basements.

Progress in chemistry, it is true, made the 19th century grittier
than it needed to be
and chemistry textbooks bulkier in the 20th.

I thought of Dalton and Mr. Anderson, my chemistry teacher,
who shook my hand the day I quit high school,
as I wondered what I would tell my parents
though confident I knew
what I would always know about chemistry.

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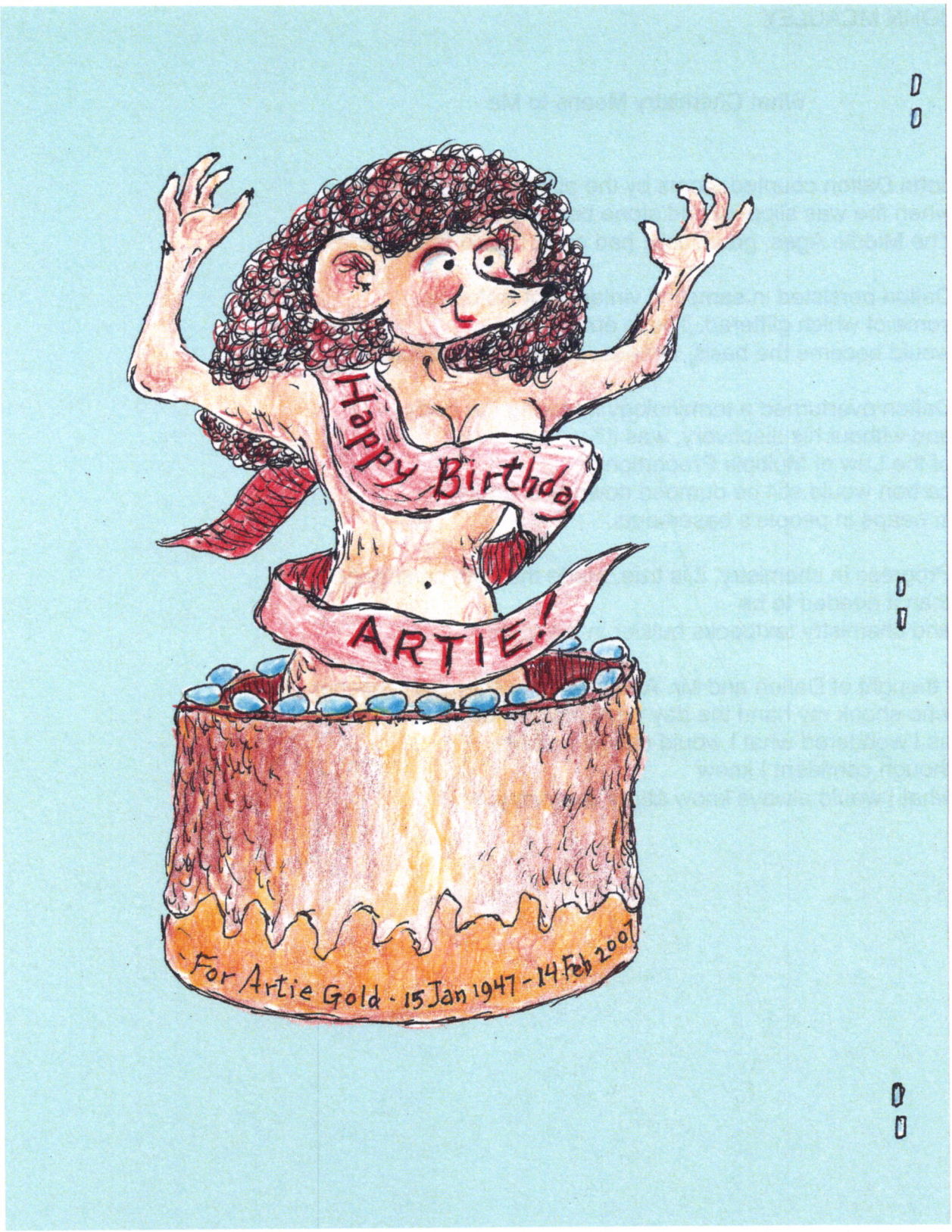

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